

When Teamwork Is Not Your Thing

Do you like working alone and not in a team? You might want to remember that it took the Bulls and Michael Jordan together to win six NBA titles. They functioned as a team, but within the team Jordan was able to showcase his individual style of play, skills, abilities and strengths. The Bulls made Jordan better, and Jordan made other players and the team better. Perhaps your strong individual style will be honed when you include others so that you and your team can succeed. This decision will take self discipline, creative thinking, hard work, self motivation and initiative. Improving oneself improves the team, and when that happens, everyone wins.



Good May be Good Enough

Stress Tip: Perfectionism is dedication to the details rather than the goal. Many projects, tasks, and products don't require perfection. Ask yourself whether good may be good enough. If so, go forward and make changes later after receiving feedback. Chances are you will produce a superior result faster with this approach as well as achieving a more balanced, 20/20 vision both professionally and personally.



Put Green Where It's Seen



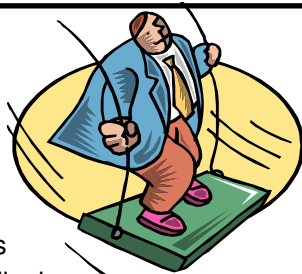
Don't just think green—do green! Unless workplace rules or conditions make it impractical, consider bringing plants into your workplace. Plants release oxygen, and their foliage absorbs pollutants. Plants also can improve psychological health, especially following a long winter. So, if you have a streak of light and you're looking for less stress or a way to introduce a bit of spring into your workplace, fill the space with a plant or two. See if you don't reap good benefits.

National Employee Health and Fitness Day

The third Wednesday in May is National Employee Health and Fitness Day, sponsored by the National Association for Health Fitness. Do you find yourself spending more time with your new HD TV and the couch? Or, do you ever find yourself winding up in the employee lounge looking for treats and not remembering how you got there? You may have reached the point of realizing you need ideas to change these or other unhealthy activities. The East Carolina University Department of Health Education and Promotion developed an Economic Cost of Inactivity Calculator. The easy-to-use online tool estimates the cost of physically inactive people and provides ideas and resources for a healthier workplace. Search for Economic Cost of Inactivity Calculator at the East Carolina University website.



Soft Skills with Hard Returns



Are you an expert on your agency's product or services but feel you still miss something that could help make you outstanding? The missing link may not be technical know-how. You may be missing crucial skills known as soft skills that research shows make a difference in the bottom line of employee success. Strong soft skills can drive an entire organization's success. They include a wide range of competencies including:

- Approachability—how easy it is to meet, know, and talk with you.
- Social skills, such as the proper way to shake hands or good table manners.
- Listening and problem solving skills.

Soft skills are predominantly people skills. Although there are many types of soft skills, almost all fall into six categories: 1) interpersonal, 2) team effectiveness, 3) social interaction, 4) business etiquette, 5) negotiation, and 6) personal work habits such as time management, organization and self-motivation. An employee may have tremendous technical knowledge, but often it is the ability to demonstrate and use the soft skills in the workplace that results in the recognition, advancement, and opportunities a person seeks. Soft skills allow you to interact with others so your technical skills can do the most good for the most people. Find out more about soft skills development from your library, human resources department, training and organizational development team, or your EAP.

Planning Against Gang Recruitment



If you live in a gang-ridden area, preventing your children from ever joining a gang is probably one of your key concerns. If so, know how to counter the inoculation technique of gang recruitment. The inoculation technique is a “pre-sell” message. It seeks to warn prospective gang members that parents or parent figures will tell them not to join a gang and will offer persuasive reasons to refuse. This strategy prepares prospective gang members to resist gang avoidance education. The counterapproach is to educate children about this psychological recruitment technique and to do some inoculation of your own. Let children know that gang recruitment includes this approach to inoculate them against parental warnings. Later, if or when children are approached by gang members, they will be more resistant to this seduction. Forewarned is forearmed.

Next Time, You'll Be Assertive



Don't kick yourself for not being assertive. Next time, you can be ready.

Before an event occurs, make a decision that you will demonstrate assertiveness. Then visualize yourself carrying out your response – sort of a “mental rehearsal.” When something happens, take a few minutes to examine your feelings about how you responded. Your feelings give clues to your success. Do you ever feel guilty for being effective? If so, you may need some coaching and support to get comfortable with assertiveness. Talk with a close friend, professional counselor, or employee assistance professional to get that person's perspective. After attempting new assertiveness skills, if you don't respond the way you hoped, decide what alternative response or responses you will make next time. Keep going and repeat the process. This “staircase technique” to achievement also works with other life challenges.

Bouncing Back with Resiliency



How well do you respond at work to anger, frustration, or disappointment? Would you give yourself high marks for the speed with which you bounce back from these difficult experiences? This phenomenon is called resiliency. Resiliency doesn't mean you ignore your feelings, and it doesn't mean you're in denial. Resiliency means you have developed the ability to temporarily put aside troubling emotional events so you can apply yourself to the problem or crisis being experienced right now. Resiliency develops with practice, and it's a clue to your leadership potential. Responsibility and accountability produce many opportunities requiring resiliency. If you're resilient, you are probably a high achiever in your personal and work life. Develop and practice resiliency, and you'll discover a valuable life skill.